

4411 (3) 1 Mr. Gmara DW 3/8
2 Library
WITHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1954

together with the

REPORT

of the

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR.



WITHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

Chairman:

T.R. Mott, Esq., C.C.

Members:

J. Ager, Esq.

R.S. Brown, Esq.

G. Clarke, Esq.

G.A. Malyon, Esq.

D.J. Maidment, Esq., J.P. (ex officio).

Mrs. J.N. Pelly.

S.J. Soar, Esq.

R.A. Tweed, Esq.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Acting Medical Officer of Health:

J.S. RANSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector and Inspector of Meat and Other Foods:

E.H.C. WADHAMS, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A., A.M.I.S.E.

Additional Sanitary Inspector:

H.R.D. SCOTT, M.S.I.A.

Clerical Assistant:

R.G. CHAPMAN.

Public Health Offices,
Town Hall,
Braintree.

May, 1955.

To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Witham.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gontlemen,

I have ploasure in presenting this Report on the Health and Vital Statistics of your District for the year 1954.

The Report shows the year to have been one of exceptional good health with the numbor of cases of infectious disease notified being unusually low.

As in other Districts, the chief immediate problem is the formation of a programme for Slum Clearance. Much depends upon the number of houses that the Council will be permittted to build, as little can be done unless the alternative accommodation is available. This should, however, not delay the formation of a programme, ospecially bearing in mind that there must remain, for many years, houses without some of the modern amonitios but which will be useful units of accommodation if maintained in a proper stato of repair.

The writing of this report comes as my last duty after acting as Medical Officer of Hoalth for just over two years.

In conclusion, may I record what a happy memory those years will be to me and thank the members of the Committee for their great kindness and consideration. I can say further that I have worked in completo harmony and accord with your Staff and leave them with regret.

I have the honour to be,

Your obediont servant,

J.S. RANSON.

Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Department,
Council Offices,
Witham.

May, 1955.

To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Witham.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit, in conjunction with the report of the Medical Officer of Health, my report upon the Sanitary circumstances of the Urban District, with details of the public services maintained by the Council, and in particular, of those administered by my Department. I am indebted to the other Officers of the Council for the information and data supplied to me for this purpose.

The two major events of the year, from the Department's point of view, were the taking over by the Council of the Bradwell Springs Water Supply, and the situation which arose following decontrol of the meat and livestock industry. In the former, the Council very commendably took over the administration of a major source of supply, and thus achieved full control of all mains supplies within their district. In the latter event, the Council found themselves faced with the unwanted liability of control and supervision of a large industry which, however, contributed little to the district's needs and nothing to its amenity. Further details will be found in the Report.

Somewhat overshadowed by these events, was the introduction by the Government of the campaign to raise the standard of existing housing conditions. In general, the housing standard of this district is high, but a certain amount of slum clearance and a considerable amount of reconditioning requires to be done before it can be regarded as wholly satisfactory. Much work has already been done during the pre-war and post-war years, and it should not be difficult to frame a future programme.

The public cleansing and sewage disposal services have again been maintained, though affected to some extent by inadequate wage rates and the consequent lack of young able-bodied staff. The extension of the Witham Sewage Works, so long awaited and so sorely needed by the growing town, is at last in sight, and the Rivenhall main drainage scheme, completed last year, is operating to the very great benefit of the public in that area.

To my usual thanks to the Council and its officers, for their support and encouragement during the year, I would like to add my very great appreciation of the sympathy accorded to me, and the assistance given to my Department, during my long illness. To my own Assistants, Mr. Scott and Mr. Chapman, for their wonderful work in my absence, and to the Clerk of the Council and the Engineer and Surveyor for their very ready help at this and all other times, I am deeply indebted.

I also would recommend to your favour, the manual

staff of the Department who have carried on, under rather more than usual difficulty, during the year. Their work is arduous, sometimes unpleasant, usually thankless, and (by comparison) not well paid. Without their unspectacular contribution, however, the public services could not be maintained.

Lastly, I would like to say, on Dr. Ranson's retirement, what a pleasure it has been to work with him. I feel that the Annual Reports of 1953 and 1954 cannot adequately reflect the value of his courteous and kindly relations with the Council and its Officers during these years.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

E.H.C. WADHAMS.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGE GROUPS DURING

1954.

(Registered and Transferred) .

| Age Group. | Registered. | No. of Deaths Transferred. |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Under 1 year | 1 | 1 |
| 1 and under 2 years | 1 | - |
| 2 and under 5 years | - | - |
| 5 and under 15 years | - | - |
| 15 and under 25 years | 4 | - |
| 25 and under 35 years | 3 | - |
| 35 and under 45 years | 2 | 2 |
| 45 and under 55 years | 5 | 3 |
| 55 and under 65 years | 6 | 7 |
| 65 and under 75 years | 11 | 10 |
| 75 and upwards | 14 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 47 | 41 |

DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES, 1954.

The Table below was compiled from figures supplied by the Registrar-General and the Classification is given under the thirty-six headings based on the Abbreviated List of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death, 1948.

| Cause of Death. | Male. | Female. |
|--|-------|---------|
| 1. Tuberculosis, respiratory | 1 | - |
| 2. Tuberculosis, other | - | - |
| 3. Syphilitic disease | - | - |
| 4. Diphtheria | - | - |
| 5. Whooping Cough | - | - |
| 6. Meningococcal infections | - | - |
| 7. Acute poliomyelitis | 1 | - |
| 8. Measles | - | - |
| 9. Other infective and parasitic diseases | 1 | - |
| 10. Malignant neoplasm, stomach | 1 | 3 |
| 11. Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus | - | - |
| 12. Malignant neoplasm, breast | - | - |
| 13. Malignant neoplasm, uterus | - | - |
| 14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms | 5 | 6 |
| 15. Leukaemia, leukaemia | - | - |
| 16. Diabetes | 1 | - |
| 17. Vascular lesions of nervous system | 5 | 5 |
| 18. Coronary disease, angina | 8 | 4 |
| 19. Hypertension with heart disease | 1 | - |
| 20. Other heart disease | 9 | 9 |
| 21. Other circulatory disease | - | - |
| 22. Influenza | 1 | - |
| 23. Pneumonia | 3 | 3 |
| 24. Bronchitis | - | 1 |
| 25. Other diseases of respiratory system | - | - |
| 26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum | 1 | - |
| 27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea | - | 1 |
| 28. Nephritis and nephrosis | 2 | - |
| 29. Hypertrophy of prostate | 1 | - |
| 30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion | - | 1 |
| 31. Congenital malformations | 1 | - |
| 32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases | 7 | 4 |
| 33. Motor vehicle accidents | - | - |
| 34. All other accidents | 1 | 1 |
| 35. Suicide | - | - |
| 36. Homicide and operations of war | - | - |
| All causes | 50. | 38. |

2.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS
AND OTHER DISEASES.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified in 1954:-

| | Total Cases Notified. | Cases admitted to Hospital. | Total Deaths. |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Scarlet Fever | 1 | - | - |
| Measles | 73 | - | - |
| Whooping Cough .. | 4 | - | - |
| Acute Poliomyelitis | 2 | 2 | - |
| Acute Pneumonia | 6 | - | 2 |
| Erysipelas | 1 | - | - |
| Infective Hepatitis | 5 | - | - |
| TOTALS ... | 92 | 2 | 2 |

Food Poisoning: There were no cases of food poisoning notified during 1954.

TUBERCULOSIS - CASES NOTIFIED DURING

1954.

| AGE PERIODS. | Pulmonary. | | Non-pulmonary. | |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| | Male. | Female. | Male. | Female. |
| Under 1 year | - | - | - | - |
| 1 and under 5 years | - | - | - | - |
| 5 and under 10 years | 1 | - | - | - |
| 10 and under 15 years | - | - | - | - |
| 15 and under 20 years | - | - | - | - |
| 20 and under 25 years | - | 1 | - | - |
| 25 and under 35 years | 1 | - | - | - |
| 35 and under 45 years | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| 45 and under 55 years | - | 1 | - | - |
| 55 and under 65 years | - | - | - | - |
| 65 and upwards | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 2 | 3 | - | 1 |

Of these cases, two were of cases re-notified on taking up residence in this District.

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS.

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|--------|----------|
| Pulmonary | ... | ... | Male | 1. |
| | | | Female | - |
| Non-pulmonary | ... | | Male | - |
| | | | Female | - |
| Total | | | | <u>1</u> |

3.

PERSONS IN NEED OF CARE AND ATTENTION.

National Assistance Act, 1948. Section 47.

The circumstances of two aged people were investigated during the year on information that they were not receiving, and could not provide for themselves, the care and attention they required.

In the first case, that of an elderly man, almost bedridden, living with his mentally defective son, the assistance of the County Council Welfare Service and local voluntary organisations was enlisted to provide the required care and to avoid the necessity of removal to hostel.

In the second case, somewhat similar, an elderly lady living with her daughter, also of weak mentality, it was considered that the circumstances did not warrant action under the above Section.

Both cases are being kept under observation.

HOUSING.

The Council's post-war housing programme reached its peak during the year, in which a further 121 houses, including 19 aged persons' bungalows, were completed on the Howbridge and Rivenhall Oak estates. In the same period, nine houses were erected by private enterprise. At the end of December, there were 66 Council Houses and two private houses under construction. The number of new houses erected in the Urban District since the end of the war, is as follows:-

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| By the local authority: | 506 (includes 84 prefabricated bungalows). |
| By private enterprise: | 92. |

The number of applicants for Council Houses was 182 at the end of 1954, compared with 197 at 31st. December, 1953. In addition, there were 30 applications for aged persons' bungalows. The Council's immediate programme, though limited by drastic reduction in allocations for 1955, includes the completion of the Rivenhall Oak scheme, and further extension of the Howbridge estate. The Council were also considering, at the end of the year, the erection of a small number of houses and bungalows at Silver End.

During the year, the Council agreed on the principle of providing houses for key workers in local industry. A related problem, the difficulty of obtaining suitable building sites for private houses, is to be overcome by the servicing of an estate site on which plots will be available for purchase for private house building.

The Council is to be congratulated on its post-war housing achievement, in that the lifting of the social burden imposed by acute housing shortage is now in sight, less than ten years after the cessation of hostilities. Housing demand has been reduced to reasonable proportions, and further extensive development of the Urban District, envisaged in the Town Planning proposals for the area, can be undertaken as soon as its scope has been defined and the related problems of finance and industrial development have been clarified.

For financial reasons, progress with improvement of pre-war Council Houses was limited, but in preparation for the complete modernisation of the scattered rural estates, the following work was carried out:-

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Sewer connections (existing drainage only): | 52 houses. |
| Pail closet conversions to W.C's: | |
| (a) temporary: | 12 houses (completed). |
| (b) permanent: | 12 houses (commenced Dec. 1954). |

The full improvement schemes for these houses, in preparation at the end of the year, provide for bathrooms, hot water systems, and the elimination of the remaining pail closets. The Council also intend to continue their scheme, commenced in 1953, for the improvement of the older houses in the Witham town area. Some of these houses, though possessing water carriage drainage, lack modern bathrooms, water heating, cooking and washing facilities.

Progress with regard to sub-standard private houses was limited to some extent by pressure of other work in the Public Health Department. The following

data shows the work undertaken during the year:-

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (a) Clearance Orders) | 9 houses vacated. |
| Compulsory Purchase Orders) | 13 houses demolished. |
| | 1 Order (4 houses) under consideration, December, 1954. |
| (b) Demolition Orders: | 4 Orders made. |
| | 5 houses vacated. |
| | 2 houses demolished. |
| | 1 Order suspended pending reconditioning. |
| (c) Closing Orders: | 2 Orders made (one in respect of part of a house). |
| | 1 house vacated. |
| (d) Voluntary Undertakings by Owners: | 6 houses vacated. |
| | 4 houses demolished. |

Of the 21 properties vacated, the tenants of 19 were rehoused by the Council, compared with 9 during the previous year. There remained occupied at 31.12.1954, 12 condemned houses as compared with 18 at 31.12.1953.

Schemes for demolition of unfit houses on two small sites, previously acquired compulsorily by the Council, and the re-development of these sites as a small shopping centre and car park respectively, were well in hand at the end of the year.

The Council responded in full to the Government's request for release of requisitioned properties, and at December 31st. only one house remained under requisition. It was expected that this would be vacated and released early in 1955.

In addition, much work was undertaken for the repair and reconditioning of houses not so defective as to warrant condemnation or closure.

The following Table summarises action taken in connection with the inspection of dwellinghouses during 1954:-

1. Inspection of dwellinghouses during the year:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (a) Total number inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) | 86. |
| (b) Number found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation | 14. |
| (c) Number (exclusive of those referred to under sub-heading (b) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation | 33. |

2. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notice:

| | |
|---|-----|
| (a) Number of houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or its Officers | 11. |
| (b) Number of other defective conditions remedied after informal action by Local Authority or its Officers | 48. |

3. Action under Statutory Powers - Housing Acts, 1936-54:

| | |
|---|------|
| (a) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs | Nil. |
| (b) Number of dwellinghouses rendered fit after service of formal notice | Nil. |
| (c) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made | 2. |
| (d) Number of dwellinghouses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made | 4. |
| (e) Number of undertakings accepted | 3. |

4. Action under Statutory Powers - Public Health Act, 1936:

| | |
|--|------|
| (a) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied | 3. |
| (b) Number of houses in which defects were remedied under service of formal notice | Nil. |

4. Number of dwellinghouses demolished:

| | |
|--|-----|
| (a) In pursuance of Clearance Orders | 13. |
| (b) In pursuance of Demolition Orders | 2. |
| (c) Voluntarily by owners | 4. |

5. Overcrowding.

| | |
|--|----|
| (a) Houses found to be overcrowded | 1. |
| (b) Overcrowding abated, after statutory action | 1. |

Improvement Grants: Housing Act, 1949.

A considerable number of enquiries were received during the year, and on the resulting survey reports, the Council considered, at some length, the formulation of a policy with regard to these grants. No final decision was reached, except to consider each case on its merits when applications were submitted. It was found, however, that intimation to owners of the repair requirements led to deferment or cancellation of the proposed applications, and no grants had been made by the end of the year, though more than a dozen applications were then pending.

It is of interest to note that the example of the Council in 1950-51, in acquiring and modernising four old houses of good structure has not been followed by property owners in the district. These houses, the improvement of which long preceded the much publicised "Stockton Experiment", are a very fine illustration of the true intention and proper application of the grant-aid

provisions of the Act. They indicate very well how the general standard of accommodation could be raised in any area of old, well-constructed houses, if the benefits of the Act were more widely sought and applied. As it is, even though the Housing (Repairs and Rents) Act, 1954, has made grants easier to get and more widely applicable, interest in this procedure appears to be confined to a few owner/occupiers and to the owners of agricultural cottages.

Housing (Repairs and Rents) Act, 1954.

This Act, intended to promote the raising of the standard of existing housing accommodation, also appears to have been received with little enthusiasm by the property owners, to whom its intention was to offer inducements, in the shape of rent increases in return for good property repair and management. It is impossible to say to what extent the rent increase provisions have been applied in the Urban District, but judging by the negligible demands from tenants for Certificates of Disrepair (by which they can contest the owner's right to impose the increase), the inducement has not been regarded as sufficient to justify the qualifying expenditure on repairs. One Certificate was applied for in 1954, and granted by the Council.

The other main purpose of the Act, is the establishment by all local authorities of schemes for the clearance of slums and the repair and reconditioning of houses not bad enough to condemn. All authorities are required to submit to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, during 1955, their proposals, in the shape of five year programmes, for this purpose. The Witham Urban District Council has anticipated this national scheme, to some extent, by dealing with sub-standard properties as opportunity occurred, ever since the war ended. It is not expected, therefore, that the Council will have difficulty in preparing a programme for completion within the five year period, for the elimination of the few remaining slum properties.

The problem of repair and reconditioning may, however, be more difficult. Without arguing the economics of present-day property ownership, it is apparent that the neglect of property maintenance, unavoidable during the period of war-time restriction, has not been made good, and that the recent inducements of the Housing Acts, 1949-52 are having little effect on the position. So far as the local authorities' powers are concerned, the application of the "reasonable cost" provisions of the 1936 Housing Act to post-war property values and building costs is neither easy nor logical. To make matters worse, the fears of the local authority associations regarding the new definition of unfitness for habitation, as applied by the Act of 1954, seem to be confirmed by the few cases in which this definition has already been questioned in the Courts. It is to be hoped that, in spite of these, the new Act will prove not to involve a lowering of standards.

WATER SUPPLY.

The public mains supplies to the Urban District were fed during the year from two sources only: the South Essex Water Company's supply from the Abberton impounding reservoir, and the Bradwell Springs supply (deep spring). The third source previously used, the Council's Braintree Road Waterworks, was out of action due to pump defects and borehole difficulties. It is doubtful whether the Council will resume supplies from this source. Silver End and

Rivenhall are fed by the Bradwell Springs undertaking, while the remainder of the Urban District receives a mixture of the two supplies, both of which undergo chloramination at the source.

In June 1954, the Council purchased the Bradwell Springs undertaking from the proprietary company which owned it, and thus became the responsible authority for the whole of the mains supplies in the Urban District. No major private supplies are now in use. It is anticipated that this purchase will have financial and other advantages, and will enable a more balanced control of the public supplies throughout the district.

The South Essex supply is used to implement the Bradwell source to the current daily requirements, and the Council holds a reservation with the South Essex Company ensuring ample water for present and expected needs.

Quality and quantity have been uniformly satisfactory throughout the year. The completion of the new ring main which, with the high pressure feed mains from the South Essex supply, now almost encircles the town of Witham, has eliminated the loss of pressure previously experienced because of inadequacy of the town mains. All new mains are super-chlorinated by the Council's staff before being put into use.

Samples, submitted periodically for bacteriological and chemical examination, showed that both supplies at the source were pure and wholesome. High bacterial counts in three samples from the Bradwell Springs undertaking were found to be due to percolation of surface water into the spring chamber and the sand trap. Chlorination of these chambers and the cleaning of the sand trap resulted in satisfactory bacteriological reports.

Because of the possibility of contamination of the Bradwell supply previously experienced when excessive demands were made on the spring, a wide safety margin is maintained between normal and maximum pumping rates. This involves the running to waste of a large quantity of wholesome water. At the close of the year, the Council's Surveyor and Consulting Engineers were considering how this margin might be reduced, with a consequent saving of water, but without incurring any risk of pollution of the supply. This supply also was found to exert some corrosive action on metals, because of its high content of free carbon dioxide. A scheme is being prepared to reduce the CO₂ content to nominal proportions, to eliminate this tendency.

House Connections, etc.

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Number of separate dwellings in the Urban District | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2700 |
| Number of separate dwellings having internal piped mains supply | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2603 |
| Estimated population so served | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8427 |
| Number of separate dwellings connected during the year | ... | ... | ... | ... | 135 |
| Number of separate dwellings served by standpipe | ... | ... | ... | ... | 48 |
| Estimated population so served | ... | ... | ... | ... | 152 |
| Remaining houses served by shallow wells, springs or cartage | ... | ... | ... | ... | 42 |
| Estimated population so served | ... | ... | ... | ... | 131 |

The following extensions to the Council's mains were made during the year:

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| 4" | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 30 yards. |
| 9" | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 800 yards. |

Water Tower:

During the year, under the supervision of the Council's Surveyor and Consulting Engineers, the 200,000 gallon water tower at the Witham Depot was internally waterproofed to remedy leaks which had gradually been assuming serious proportions. The tower had been in continuous use for twenty years, and as it constitutes the only satisfactory balancing control for the Witham supplies, the sealing of its internal surface with three layers of asphalt, without undue interference with the supply, presented some difficulty. By constant and close supervision, however, this was successfully achieved.

Water Consumption and Future Requirements:

Total water supplied by:

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1. Braintree Road Waterworks | ... | ... | Nil. |
| 2. Bradwell Springs: | | | |
| (a) To Silver End | ... | ... | 28,466,910 gallons. |
| (b) To remainder of Urban District | | | 52,958,930 gallons. |
| 3. South Essex Water Company | ... | ... | <u>64,758,860 gallons.</u> |
| Total Consumption | ... | | <u>146,379,700 gallons.</u> |

Average consumption per head per day:

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----------------|
| Domestic demand | ... | ... | 29.15 gallons. |
| Trade demand | ... | ... | 19.15 gallons. |
| Average total consumption per head per day | | | 48.30 gallons. |

The average consumption shows a decrease of 1.09 gallons per head per day.

As stated earlier in this report, the Council's reservation with the South Essex Water Company is more than adequate for the present needs and the normal future development of the Urban District. Whether it will be adequate for the rate and extent of development envisaged in the Town Planning proposals for the area, will depend on whether and to what extent these proposals are confirmed and implemented.

Sampling:

The following Table shows the number of samples submitted for examination:

| | | | | <u>Satisfactory.</u> | <u>Unsatisfactory.</u> | <u>Total.</u> |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <u>Mains Water.</u> | | | | | | |
| Chemical | ... | ... | ... | 5. | - | 5. |
| Bacteriological | ... | ... | ... | 42. | 3. | 45. |
| 2. <u>Other Supplies.</u> | | | | | | |
| Chemical | ... | ... | ... | 2. | - | 2. |
| Bacteriological | ... | ... | ... | 2. | - | 2. |
| Totals | | | | 51. | 3. | 54. |

The unsatisfactory bacteriological reports on mains water were due, in all three cases, to high bacterial counts at the Bradwell Springs undertaking, as already reported.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The following Table shows the drainage facilities in use in the district at 31st. December, 1954:-

| Houses with | Drainage to | | | | | | TOTALS. |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Sewer | Septic Tanks etc. | Cesspools. | Ditches via Cesspools. | Direct to Ditches. | No Drainage. | |
| W.C's, Sinks and Drains. | 2544. | 6. | 25. | 8. | - | - | 2583. |
| W.C's, Gully Drains, no Sinks. | 4. | - | - | - | - | - | 4. |
| Pail Closets, Sinks and Drains. | - | - | 35. | 18. | 32. | - | 85. |
| Pail Closets and Sinks. | - | - | - | - | - | 2. | 2. |
| Pail Closets and Gully Drains only. | - | - | - | - | 8. | - | 8. |
| Privies and Gully Drains only. | - | - | - | - | 4. | - | 4. |
| Pail Closets, no Sinks or Drains. | - | - | - | - | - | 12. | 12. |
| Privies, no Sinks or Drains. | - | - | - | - | - | 2. | 2. |
| Totals | 2548. | 6. | 60. | 26. | 44. | 16. | 2700. |

Of the 152 properties not at present connected to the sewer, a few are capable of immediate connection, and the sewerage scheme for Rivenhall, now completed, provides for the connection of a further 46 existing dwellinghouses. Prospective future development along the lines at present suggested should allow for the serving of another 20 existing houses. There will then remain 80-90 agricultural and isolated properties for which no economic sewerage scheme appears to be possible. The Council already provides a free emptying service for domestic

cesspools, three times annually, and additional emptying, when required, on repayment. This service is also available to industrial and agricultural premises not connected to the sewer system.

The existing sewer systems at Witham and Silver End are both liable to surcharging at times of heavy rainfall.

It has been noticeable that since sewer flushing in dry weather was recommenced on the acquisition of the cesspool emptying vehicle, major blockages of the mains sewer systems have not occurred, in contrast to previous years when flushing was not practised.

Rivenhall Sewer Scheme.

This scheme, with its own sewage disposal works at Rivenhall End, was completed in the latter half of 1953. Though a few connections were made in that year, it was not until 1954 that the scheme came into proper operation. During this year, a considerable number of connections have been completed, with conversions of pail closets to W.C.'s, and in some cases, the installation of bathrooms. All the drainage from the 40 pre-war Rivenhall Council houses has been connected, though schemes of closet conversion and improvement have not yet been completed in these cases. Some 39 cesspools, many of them overflowing or discharging to ditches, have been disconnected, filled and sealed, with very obvious improvement in the sanitary condition of the neighbourhood. The sewers of the new Council estate were connected when the main sewer scheme was carried out, and the houses now being completed on that estate enjoy all modern amenity.

A considerable number of private dwellings still remain to be connected to the system, but progress is good, and it is hoped that very soon cesspools and foul ditches will no longer spoil this pleasant ward of the Urban District.

It is regrettable that the Rivenhall Primary School may be one of the last premises in the area to have the advantage of main drainage. Despite all the efforts of the Council and the School Managers, the Education authority could offer no more than consideration of a scheme when estimates for 1955-56 came to be submitted. In many places in the past, and possibly in some at present, it has been a criticism of national housing conditions that children were learning at school the advantages of sanitary amenities which their homes did not possess. It is an ironic reflection on our times that at Rivenhall, for some time to come, the reverse will be the case.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

There are now four major sewage disposal plants in the Urban District, three owned by the Council and one administered by the Ministry of Works for the National Assistance Board. The three Urban District Sewage Works serve the communities of Witham, Silver End and Rivenhall, and the fourth plant treats sewage from the Board's Hostel for Displaced Persons at Rivenhall Aerodrome Camp.

Witham Sewage Works:

Details of the layout and capacity of this plant have been given in previous reports. No major alterations or improvement has been made and the flow to the

works continues to increase with the development of the town.

After many delays, the scheme of extension of these works, first considered by the Council prior to the war, and an increasingly urgent need during the years of post-war development, was sanctioned by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in January, 1954. A tender for the work was accepted in May, but a starting date could not be obtained until late in the year, and it was finally arranged for the work to commence in January, 1955. The scheme involves the virtual replacement of the obsolete and overloaded existing plant by an up-to-date works capable of dealing with all present flows. Though the theoretical margin of capacity for future development is small, the standard of purification now achieved under very bad conditions indicates that the new plant will amply suffice for normal development of the town for some years to come. If, however, large scale development takes place quickly, a further second and third stages of works extension have been provided for in the design and could readily be undertaken.

The new plant, designed by Messrs. Pick, Everard, Keay and Gimson, the Council's Consulting Engineers, will undoubtedly reduce much of the manual labour now required, though the complication of layout and control involved in adapting a new plant to two existing sewer outfalls at widely different levels, will require constant and intelligent supervision and maintenance. Much careful thought and investigation has also been necessary to provide in the scheme for the requirements of the Essex River Board and the mutually conflicting interests of the Southend Waterworks Company.

The present plant, of course, will have to continue in operation for some 12-18 months while the new plant is under construction. This, in itself, will require careful supervision and close co-operation between the Council and the Contractors, to ensure that no interruption of treatment occurs.

The record of the works during 1954, though again unsatisfactory, nevertheless illustrates what can be achieved with an hopelessly inadequate plant by careful maintenance and improvisation. The Public Health Department is fortunate in having Mr. T. Thorpe as Works' Manager, without whose constant care and intelligent supervision at all times, major difficulties and breakdowns might not have been avoided.

Froth production, due to detergents in the sewage, decreased during 1954 to negligible proportions. Whether this is due to less wasteful use of synthetic washing compounds or to alterations in their character is difficult to say, but the problem does not appear to be developing into the bogey which was anticipated at first by sewage disposal and river pollution authorities.

Little difficulty was experienced during the year with trade constituents in the sewage flows to this plant. The treatment plant installed by the Crittall Manufacturing Co. Ltd., in June 1949, to counteract adverse effects of galvanising wastes, continued to operate satisfactorily.

Farmland:

The 1953-54 cropping season was marred by very inclement weather and by the failure of two acres of flax, due to zinc toxicity. Nevertheless, the

crops produced a net profit to the Council of £146.11s.10d. from the $21\frac{3}{4}$ acres under cultivation. The crops grown were wheat ($10\frac{3}{4}$ acres) and flax (11 acres). For the 1954-55 season, 10 acres of wheat have been sown and it is hoped to sow an area with flax when it is known how much more of the sewage works land will be available for cultivation while the works extension proceeds.

The experimental cultivation of tip land with flax suffered from inclement weather, as did the main crop. Constant rain prevented proper weed control at the right time, and the crop became choked with weeds. Further rain prevented its proper ripening and easy harvesting, and it cannot be said that the experiment was a success. It is intended, however, to persist with this scheme, as there is every indication that given normal weather conditions, profitable crops can be grown on land consisting mainly of house refuse and other wastes.

The financial return from the sewage works farmland, during the seven years since the Council undertook the cultivation, is shown in the Table below, and compares favourably with the annual rental of £33.12s.6d. previously received when the land was let to a local farmer.

| Season. | Crops. | Profit. | | | Loss. | | |
|----------|---------------------------|---------|-----|------|-------|----|----|
| | | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. |
| 1947-48. | Wheat, potatoes ... | 63. | 7. | 10. | - | - | - |
| 1948-49. | Barley, potatoes ... | 294. | 1. | 4. | - | - | - |
| 1949-50. | Wheat ... | 2. | 19. | - | - | - | - |
| 1950-51. | Clover, mangold, flax ... | - | - | - | 58. | 7. | 7. |
| 1951-52. | Flax, wheat ... | 128. | 19. | 3. | - | - | - |
| 1952-53. | Wheat, clover, flax ... | 335. | 3. | - | - | - | - |
| 1953-54. | Wheat, flax. ... | 146. | 11. | 10. | - | - | - |
| | | 971. | 2. | 3. | 58. | 7. | 7. |
| | Net profit ... | £912. | 14. | 8d. | | | |
| | Net annual profit ... | £130. | 7. | 10d. | | | |

Silver End Sewage Works:

This plant, described in detail in previous reports, serves the community of Silver End, a population of about 2,000. Increased flows over the last ten years, due to development and a large trade flow, involve overloading of the plant at peak periods and in wet weather. The Council's Consulting Engineers are preparing a scheme of extension and improvement to cope with present and expected development and with the effect of trade discharges. The latter are of a nature and quantity of some concern to the Council, as the degree of purification has been adversely affected by them.

The average dry weather flow to the works, gauged in 1953, is 95,000 gallons daily. This rate of flow involves a theoretical settlement period of 12-13 hours retention, with dosage to the primary filters of 105 gallons and to the secondary filters of 320 gallons per cubic yard per day. The resulting standard of purification is generally satisfactory, but is deteriorating due to the above causes.

During the year, new shafts and bearings had to be fitted to both pumps. Renewal of these is necessary every three to four years, an abnormally high replacement frequency, and is thought to be due to the poor design of shaft bearing and lubrication, though certain trade constituents in the sewage may also contribute to abnormal wear. The pumps have been in use for many years, are obsolete, and now have a gauged output of some 75% of their efficiency rating when new.

The secondary filters have given recurrent ponding trouble over several years. Although the feed to them is very high indeed, the ponding was thought to be due mainly to deterioration of the clinker medium with subsequent retention of humus. This was confirmed when one was dismantled during the summer. Work of cleaning and regrading of the medium is being done by Departmental labour, and it is hoped to have both filters rebuilt and operating satisfactorily during 1955.

Rivenhall Sewage Works:

This new plant operated successfully throughout the year, during which the flow to it increased to about one third of its designed dry weather flow (18,000 gallons per day). Minor adjustments were found necessary at various points, as is not unusual in a new works, but the plant shows promise of efficient and trouble-free operation.

Because of the very gradual build-up of the flow, while more and more properties became connected, it was found that self-clearing velocity had not been attained in the sewers, and a certain amount of settlement and septic action was occurring in them. This led to some small nuisance from manholes, and to the periodic reception at the works of gushes of stale sewage. The problem has been overcome by sealing manhole and inspection chamber covers, and by frequent flushing of the sewers, but should resolve itself when sufficient house connections have been made to provide adequate flow.

Rivenhall Camp Sewage Works:

This plant, constructed during the war to serve the Aerodrome, now treats the sewage from some hundreds of displaced persons occupying the camp under the control of the National Assistance Board.

The plant is not working to capacity and has maintained an efficient standard of purification.

Sampling of Sewage, Effluents, etc.

| | | <u>Satisfactory</u> | <u>Unsatisfactory.</u> | <u>Total.</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Witham Sewage Works | ... | 30. | 29. | 59. |
| Silver End Sewage Works | ... | 4. | 2. | 6. |
| Rivenhall Sewage Works | ... | 6. | - | 6. |
| Rivenhall Camp Sewage Works | ... | 1. | - | 1. |
| | | <hr/> | | |
| Totals | ... | 41. | 31. | 72. |
| | | <hr/> | | |

DRAINAGE OF TRADE PREMISES.

During the year the following trade wastes have been dealt with:-

- (1) Witham: (a) Galvanising Wastes: Treated by the Company, surplus treated liquid and waste sludge received and disposed of by the Council under agreement, as previously described.
- (b) Etch Wash Wastes: By further arrangement with the same Company, the periodic discharge of these wastes to the Council's sewers, has been allowed, subject to limitation as to strength and rate of flow, and to a payment based on quantity discharged and costs of analysis.
- (c) Flour Mill Washings: Treated and received under agreement as previously described.
- (d) Fruit Processing Wastes: Improvised treatment method installed by the Company, pending proper treatment and discharge to sewer of treated liquid, under agreement, when sewer to be laid on the Council's new industrial estate becomes available.
- (2) Silver End:
- (a) Galvanising Wastes: The Company has installed treatment plant to purify and re-circulate the effluent, with a bleed-off to the Council's sewer of surplus liquid. Treatment sludge to be removed by Council, as at Witham.
- (b) Shorardising Wastes: These acid metallic wastes, after neutralising, are removed periodically by the Council's cesspool emptier, on repayment, to avoid their inclusion in the sewage flows.
- (c) Bronzing, case-hardening and rumbler wastes: These wastes have been discharging to the Council's sewer system. Samplings during 1953-4 have shown the sewage to contain constituents of these processes harmful to sewage treatment, and adverse effect on purification, sludge drying and sludge disposal have been noted. The Company is to investigate, with the Council's Officers, the best method of treatment and future control.

In addition, investigation into the failure of two acres of flax on the Council's land brought to light that the soil was heavily contaminated with zinc, which, in acid conditions, proved inhibitive to plant life.

It is thought that the zinc originated from heavy treatment of the land (during 1947-49) with sewage sludge, when the latter must have contained a very high content of the industrial waste which subsequently caused serious effect on the treatment plant and resulted in the agreement mentioned in 1(a) above. Zinc toxicity in soil cannot be removed by any practical process, but it can be nullified by maintaining a high degree of alkalinity. Given adequate treatment with lime, therefore, the land suffers only the disadvantage of being unsuitable for those crops which prefer an acid soil.

Nevertheless, it has been thought advisable, until safe limits of zinc content can be established, to discontinue the sale of sewage sludge to local farmers.

During the year, a total of 24 samples of various kinds were submitted for analysis to detect trade waste constituents.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Close liaison has been maintained with the Essex River Board throughout the year which was, however, reasonably free from pollution problems. Apart from very minor disagreement on proposed byelaws, the Council support the Board's objectives of pure rivers and better fishing. As to the latter, it is hoped that not only more varied and abundant fish life will result, but that fishing facilities will be made more fully available to the general public. The Council regard the natural beauty of the rivers Brain and Blackwater as an important facet of the district's character, and have provided for its protection and enhancement in their Town Planning proposals.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

The administration of the Public Cleansing services remains as described in the Annual Report for 1953.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

Collection:

The collection of house refuse for the whole of the Urban District has been maintained during the year, providing a weekly collection from all parts of the area.

There are now two vehicles operating this service, one full-time and one two days per week. The Council has agreed to consider the purchase, in 1955, of an additional chassis, to provide a second full-time collection vehicle, as the development of the district has imposed much more work than can properly be done with the existing vehicles.

Abnormal tyre wear, experienced in 1953 and the beginning of 1954, was eliminated after improvement of tip road maintenance, demonstrating that neglect of this work can quickly make itself felt.

Disposal:

Tipping has continued throughout the year on the Council's land adjoining the river Blackwater, where marshland is being made up. It is hoped by tipping in this area, to add some ten acres of useful agricultural land to that now farmed at the adjoining sewage works. Tipping capacity at this site was assessed in 1953 as being adequate for 5-6 years' disposal, at present rate of development. During the year, however, it became apparent that the necessary disposal of very large quantities of spoil from the sewage works extensions in 1955 would take up rather more than one year's tipping space. At December, 1954 therefore, the tip could not be regarded as adequate for more than 4 years' further disposal. As to deposit another 6' layer over the present site would frustrate the object of useful reclamation of marshland, and at the same time create an unsightly plateau in a very pleasant part of the district, alternative disposal arrangements must soon be considered. Further marsh and meadow, liable to flooding, is available at the confluence of the rivers Brain and Blackwater, and the Council has already considered the possible use of this land, the majority of which, it is felt, could be returned to agriculture as portions of it become filled.

The Council has also under preliminary consideration, the possibility of a refuse separation and sludge/refuse composting scheme. There is no doubt that very much valuable raw material would be recovered which is now being buried in the tip, in spite of present salvage recovery operations. The success of a composting scheme depends mainly on two factors:

- (a) The consistent production of a balanced mature compost, and
- (b) The availability of a ready market to absorb it.

It is felt that the intensely agricultural nature of the area around Witham favours the success of such a venture, which would be doubly advantageous in providing a less wasteful means of refuse disposal and in reducing the district's tipping space requirements for the future.

Salvage:

Collection of salvage is effected in conjunction with house refuse collection, with the exception that a special collection is made weekly from trade premises. Figures for the 1954-55 financial year, given below, show an increase in income. A profit of £430 accrued to the Council, after bonus of £382.14s. was paid to the collection staff. Considerable expenditure was incurred in providing extensions and improvements to the Depot at Maldon Road.

| Commodity. | 1953-54. | | | | | | 1954-55. | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----|------|--------|-----|-----|----------|-----|------|--------|-----|----|
| | Weights. | | | Value. | | | Weights. | | | Value. | | |
| | t. | c. | qrs. | £ | s. | d. | t. | c. | qrs. | £. | s. | d. |
| Waste Paper | 141. | 7. | 1. | 1063. | 11. | 6. | 134. | 6. | 2. | 1076. | 7. | |
| Bones | 3. | 13. | 3. | 19. | 8. | 11. | 1. | 6. | 1. | 8. | 10. | |
| Rags | 3. | 6. | 0. | 106. | 2. | 6. | 3. | 8. | 1. | 131. | 13. | |
| Sacking | 3. | 19. | 2. | 24. | 17. | 6. | 1. | 16. | 0. | 11. | 15. | |
| Iron | 68. | 9. | 3. | 280. | 8. | 3. | 67. | 17. | 2. | 307. | 13. | |
| Metals | | 19. | 3. | 86. | 15. | 1. | | 18. | 0. | 109. | 7. | |
| Jars | 2. | 3. | 0. | 14. | 17. | 4. | 2. | 0. | 0. | 12. | 12. | |
| Bottles | 2. | 10. | 0. | 13. | 10. | 10. | | 14. | 0. | 3. | 19. | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | 3. | 10. | 3. | | | | 3. | 10. | |
| Totals | 226. | 9. | 0. | 1613. | 2. | 2. | 212. | 6. | 2. | 1665. | 9. | |

Cesspool, Gully Emptying and Sewer Flushing.

The following work was performed by the Council's cesspool emptier during the year:-

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Domestic emptyings (free service): | 128 cesspools, 149 loads. |
| Rechargeable work: | 162 cesspools, 253 loads. |
| Trade Waste: | 496 loads. |

In addition, the sewer systems of the district were flushed on three occasions and the road gulleys on all district roads were cleansed on three occasions.

The cesspool emptying vehicle met with an accident in September. Recovery of the loaded vehicle (weighing 9 tons) from a very deep ditch was not an easy operation and the Department was greatly indebted to the Council's Engineer and Surveyor for his very able assistance on this occasion.

COSTS.

In view of the early preparation of this Report, before the Council's accounts for the year 1954-5 have been closed, it is not possible to include the actual summary of Public Cleansing Costs. Total and unit costs undoubtedly rose during the year, owing to wage awards, staff sickness, and difficulty in obtaining suitable labour. Apart from this, it is not expected that the cost of the cleansing service in 1954 will show any marked difference from that of 1953.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

A total of 5497 visits and inspections were made during the year, as follows:-

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Housing Acts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 289. |
| Public Health Acts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 103. |
| Verminous Premises: | Visits | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 84. |
| (including woodworm) | Inspections | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 36. |
| Complaints | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22. |
| Slaughterhouses | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 830. |
| Butchers' Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 38. |
| Fish Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Bakehouses | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Restaurants | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22. |
| Ice Cream Vendors | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 19. |
| Licensed Premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10. |
| Food Preparation Premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 84. |
| Dairies | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Cowsheds | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Milkshops | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Sampling: Ice Cream | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14. |
| Milk | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Water | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 54. |
| Sewage Effluent | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 39. |
| Shops Acts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18. |
| Factories | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 41. |
| Infectious Disease: Visits | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6. |
| Disinfections | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Water Supplies | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 26. |
| Streams and Water Courses | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Drains and Sewers: Inspected | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 401. |
| Tested | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 32. |
| Cesspools, Septic Tanks and Pail Closets | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 21. |
| Refuse Tips | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 83. |
| Sewage Works | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 123. |
| Salvage | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 81. |
| Rat Infestations | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2794. |
| Tents, Vans and Sheds | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 50. |
| Offensive Accumulations | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8. |
| Stables and Pig Styes | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Schools | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Council House Applicants | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 32. |
| Miscellaneous | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 101. |

In addition, a total of 1,194 interviews were given to owners, builders, tenants and other interested parties.

Nuisances, etc., on Books, with Number of Notices served.
(Public Health Acts only).

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Number of Notices outstanding, 31st. December, 1953 | ... | ... | ... | 10. |
| Number of Intimation Notices served during the year | ... | ... | ... | 62. |
| Number of Statutory Notices served during the year | ... | ... | ... | 4. |
| Number of Notices complied with during the year | ... | ... | ... | 53. |
| Number of Notices outstanding on Books, 31st. December, 1954 | ... | ... | ... | 23. |

The following list classifies the nuisances and defects dealt with:-

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Dampness, rising and penetrative | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13. |
| Defective roofs, parapets, gutters, R.W.P's etc. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 28. |
| Defective brickwork, rendering and pointing etc. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14. |
| Defective ceilings and walls | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22. |
| Defective doors, windows and floors | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16. |
| Defective cooking ranges, firegrates and flues | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14. |
| Defective yard/access paving | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16. |
| Defective W.C. structures | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12. |
| Defective W.C. fittings | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13. |
| Defective sinks, waste pipes etc. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13. |
| Drainage defects | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 61. |
| Defective vent pipes | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Sewer connections/conversions | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 23. |
| Inadequate means for disposal of roof water | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Defective/overflowing cesspools | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Disused cesspools sealed | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22. |
| Defective/Inadequate water service or supply | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8. |
| Overcrowding (caravans) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Dirty/Offensive condition of premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Offensive ditches | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Offensive accumulations | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Nuisance from keeping of animals | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Absence of/Defective condition of dustbins | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 62. |
| Infestations: Rats and Mice | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 428. |
| Vermín and insects (including woodworm) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 49. |

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

During the year, a total of 41 visits were paid to factories and workshops throughout the district, which figure does not include visits to Food Preparation Premises also classified as factories, as these are dealt with under another heading. Conditions generally were found to be satisfactory. New sanitary accommodation has been required at one factory and four building sites. At the end of 1954, the number of outworkers on the register was comprising

| | <u>Witham U.D.C.</u> | <u>Other Local Authorities.</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Glove Manufacturers | 58. | 593. |
| Seed Merchants | 7. | - |

Notification of outworkers employed in other districts is made to the local authorities concerned.

Details of the inspections made during the year to premises in the Urban District under the Factories Act, 1937, are given in the Table below:-

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

1. INSPECTION for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

| Premises. | Number on Register. | Number of | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Inspections. | Written Notices. | Occupiers Prosecuted. |
| (i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by local authorities | 4. | 5. | 2. | Nil. |
| (ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the local authority. | 46. | 32. | Nil. | Nil. |
| (iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the local authority (excluding outworkers' premises) | 4. | 4. | 1. | Nil. |
| TOTAL | 54. | 41. | 3. | Nil. |

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found:

| | Number of cases in which defects were found. | | | | Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted. |
|--|--|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| | Found. | Remedied. | Referred. | | |
| | | | To H.M. Inspector. | By H.M. Inspector. | |
| Want of cleanliness (S.1) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Overcrowding (S.2) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Unreasonable temperature (S.3) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Inadequate ventilation (S.4) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Ineffective drainage of floors(S.6) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)-- | | | | | |
| (a) Insufficient | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| (b) Unsuitable or defective | 6 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| (c) Not separate for sexes | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outworkers) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 9 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 1 |

SHOPS ACTS.

In addition to the normal duties of the local authorities under the Shops Act, 1950, the Council have accepted delegation from the Essex County Council (the major Shops Act authority) of powers of enforcement of Secs 3, 4 & 5 of Section 38.

18 visits were paid to shops during the year, apart from purposes other than Shops Acts administration. The following matters were dealt with:-

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Routine inspections | ... | ... | ... | 17. |
| Dampness | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Structural defects | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Washing facilities | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Sanitary accommodation | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Temperature | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Ventilation | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Drainage | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Water supply | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Shop reconditioning and modernisation | | | | 4. |
| Matters referred to Essex County Council | | | | 1. |

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

The Council's caravan site was completed in February, and by the end of the year was occupied by its full complement of 12 trailer caravans. On this site, individual plots are let to van occupiers at reasonable rentals. Hard standing, water supply, W.C. accommodation, drying ground and waste disposal facilities are provided. The site is lighted at night during street lighting hours.

The Council's object in providing a suitable site for stationing the trailer caravans when occupiers from time to time require sites in the Urban District, has not been fulfilled, in that it was found neither legal nor reasonable to refuse licences for other sites, where sanitary conditions were satisfactory and the particular location was required for special reasons. It is certain, however, that without the Council's site, van occupiers would find it very difficult to obtain satisfactory locations. While demand for plots remains high, as is to be expected, the site will therefore serve a useful purpose. The rents received amply cover the expense of providing and maintaining this service.

Where private sites are licensed by the Council, they require to be satisfied as to hard standing, water supply, sanitary accommodation and waste disposal facilities. One such site was licensed during the year and 4 licences were issued for the stationing of individual vans at various parts of the Urban District.

In one case it was necessary to serve statutory notice for the abatement of overcrowding of one small van, in which a man, wife and four young children were living and sleeping. This matter was still outstanding at 31st. December, 1954. A further notice, incorporating the conditions of licence of the private site referred to above, was in course of compliance at the end of the year.

INSECT PESTS.

The following cases of infestation were dealt with:

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|----|
| Flies | ... | ... | 2. | Ants | ... | ... | 4. |
| Cockroaches | ... | ... | 1. | Wasps | ... | ... | 6. |
| Woodworm | ... | ... | 36. | | | | |

Progress with woodworm treatment in the older Council Houses was not maintained throughout the year, but it is hoped to resume the drive against this pest during 1955.

Minor infestations are dealt with by the issue of insecticides and advice to the householders concerned. Difficult cases are dealt with by the Department on a rechargeable basis.

In addition, the Council's refuse tips are periodically treated to destroy crickets and other insects. Insecticides used are D.D.T (5%) and gammoxane, both in liquid and powder form, and cyanide preparations. The latter are used only in cases where the safety of human beings and domestic animals can be ensured. Also

for minor household infestations, chiefly by flies of various kinds, a pyrethrum compound giving a quick "knock-down" effect is used.

RODENT CONTROL.

The Council conducts its own Rodent Control service, using a specially trained operative for the purpose. The work has been carried out in co-operation with the pest control department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Details of the year's work are as follows:-

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Inspections made | ... | ... | ... | 778. |
| Treatment visits | ... | ... | ... | 2016. |
| Infestations found:- | | | | |
| Mice | ... | ... | ... | 20. |
| Minor | ... | ... | ... | 392. |
| Major | ... | ... | ... | 16. |
| Bodies recovered:- | | | | |
| Mice | ... | ... | ... | 85. |
| Rats | ... | ... | ... | 1407. |
| Estimated kill:- | | | | |
| Rats | ... | ... | ... | 2555. |

The sewer systems at Witham and Silver End were treated with satisfactory results. Infestation in both systems was found to be very light. The following are the details of the treatments carried out:-

| | <u>Witham.</u> | <u>Silver End.</u> |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Manholes, test baited | 10. | 10. |
| Manholes, test baited, showing takes | 1. | 3. |
| Manholes, poison baited | 5. | 12. |
| Manholes, poison baited, showing takes | 1. | 3. |
| Bodies recovered | - | - |

A free domestic treatment service has been in operation for some years and is of great assistance in ensuring that my Department is informed of infestation at a very early stage when they are, of course, much easier to deal with. It is felt that following many years of concerted national effort against rodents, the annual infestation of the built-up areas from the surrounding agricultural land does not speak very highly of the results achieved. Evidently a greater degree of co-operation between the responsible authorities is required to prevent this, and it is hoped during 1955 to promote discussions on this matter.

A notable feature during the year was the abnormal heavy autumn infestations dealt with.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Meat Inspection:

Conditions prevailing after the decontrol of the meat and livestock industry in July 1954, so far as Witham was concerned, can only be described as chaotic.

Prior to decontrol, the Council had gone to great pains to ascertain the slaughtering requirements of the area. It then appeared that the retention of the Ministry of Food slaughterhouse would not be required, and that the local butchers' requirements would be met by the licensing of one, or two at most, of the available private slaughterhouses. Many butchers declared the intention, which they have since observed, of obtaining supplies from wholesale markets or slaughterhouses outside the Urban area. The Council therefore felt that no action on their part was required, and neither the transfer of the lease of the Ministry's requisitioned premises, nor the subsequent offer of sale to the Council, were accepted.

This slaughterhouse, originally a "registered" premises, and licensed prior to the war under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 until requisitioned, passed on decontrol to the hands of a wholesale meat supply firm. From the inception of private killing on 2.7.1954 until the end of the year, conditions were most unsatisfactory. Heavy killing programmes, at irregular hours, inadequate and unsuitable labour, and lack of authoritative management and good maintenance, resulted both in adverse reports on the conduct of the premises and to the breakdown of the meat inspection service, which had been maintained, with some difficulty, at 100% throughout the 14 years of control by the Ministry of Food.

The Council had issued in June 1954 in place of a licence for the premises, a three-months' notice under Section 57, Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for considerable repairs to be carried out. This was complied with, but other conditions were so generally unsatisfactory that when the issue of a licence came to be considered in October, the Council granted one for two months only, with a warning to the occupier that very great improvement in conditions and maintenance was required if renewal was to be granted. At December 31st. considerable improvement in hygiene and maintenance had been achieved, but the heavy and irregular killing hours still prevented anything like 100% inspection of the meat. It is estimated that between October 1st. and December 31st. only some 30-35% of animals were inspected.

During the period of Ministry control, it was estimated that the slaughterhouse served a population of about 35,000. Following decontrol the heavier killing figures indicated that, bearing in mind the increased consumption of meat, the equivalent population served was about 50,000. None of this meat is consumed within the Urban District, most of it being despatched to North and East London, the extra-metropolitan area of Essex and to Central and South-East Essex.

The Council is thus faced with the considerable problem of achieving a satisfactory meat inspection service, a matter of great practical difficulty and expense, without any local benefit whatever being derived therefrom.

Inspection figures for the year, given below, show the comparison of slaughtering during 1954, with those of the previous two years and with 1938:-

| | | | | | | <u>1938.</u> | <u>1952.</u> | <u>1953.</u> | <u>1954.</u> |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cattle | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 782. | 2,531. | 2,337. | 1,878. |
| Calves | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 135. | 1,376. | 861. | 719. |
| Sheep and lambs | | | ... | ... | ... | 2,438. | 3,529. | 3,704. | 3,625. |
| Pigs | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,266. | 1,701. | 3,328. | 6,256. |
| Goats | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | - | 3. | 1. | 1. |
| | | | | | | <u> </u> | <u> </u> | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| Totals | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | <u>5,561.</u> | <u>9,140.</u> | <u>10,231.</u> | <u>12,479.</u> |

Swine fever was again detected among pigs slaughtered, on three occasions.

11 cases of Cysticercus Bovis were detected and the carcasses were dealt with in accordance with the Ministry's recommended procedure, i.e. condemnation of the parts known to be affected, and refrigeration of the remainder for at least three weeks before issue.

The following Table, as required by the Ministry of Health, shows the animals killed and inspected, the condemnation of diseased carcasses and parts, and the percentage incidence of disease among the animals inspected.

It will be noted from the Table, by reference to the 1953 report, that much less meat was condemned during 1954, in spite of the larger number of animals killed. Taking all possible factors into consideration, it is still impossible not to relate this reduction in condemnation directly to the reduction in inspection from October onwards. The Council are very seriously concerned with this position, and every effort is being made to bring about a satisfactory standard of meat production and 100% inspection.

Licensing: Slaughterhouses and Slaughtermen:

The following licences were in operation at December 31st. 1954.

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Slaughterhouse licences | 2. |
| Slaughtermen's licences | 7. |

Grading and Certification of Pigs:

Upon decontrol, this duty was undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Food, but upon the breakdown of the meat inspection service, during the protracted illness of the Chief Sanitary Inspector, this work had to be handed back to the Ministry's officers.

The following Table sets out the particulars of the animals slaughtered and of inspection and condemnation.

| | Cattle. | Calves. | Sheep and Lambs. | Pigs. | Goats. | Total. |
|---|---------|---------|------------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| Number killed | 1878. | 719. | 3625. | 6256. | 1. | 12,479. |
| Number inspected | 1496. | 559. | 3451. | 4661. | 1. | 10,168. |
| <u>All Diseases Except Tuberculosis.</u> | | | | | | |
| Whole carcasses condemned | 4. | 11. | 20. | 42. | 1. | 77. |
| Weight in lbs. condemned | 1993. | 784. | 939. | 4934. | - | 8,650. |
| Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned | 673. | 31. | 308. | 1423. | 1. | 2,435. |
| Weight in lbs. condemned. | 10632. | 59. | 941. | 4485. | 1. | 16,117. |
| Percentage of inspected carcasses affected | 45.25 | 7.51 | 9.5 | 31.43 | - | - |
| <u>Tuberculosis only.</u> | | | | | | |
| Whole carcasses condemned. | 14. | 1. | 1. | 1. | 1. | 16. |
| Weight in lbs. condemned | 8762. | 32. | - | 232. | - | 9,026. |
| Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned | 127. | 1. | - | 257. | 1. | 384. |
| Weight in lbs. condemned | 9450. | - | 1. | 2186. | 1. | 11,636. |
| Percentage of inspected carcasses affected | 9.42 | .18 | - | 5.53 | - | - |

MILK AND DAIRIES.

The local sanitary authority is now responsible for the supervision of distribution and the registration and licencing of dairies, distributors and dealers. The following local registrations and licences are in force under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949:-

| | <u>Tuberculin Tested.</u> | <u>Pasteurised.</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Dairies | - | 3. |
| Dealers | 4. | 4. |
| Supplementary Dealers ... | 2. | 2. |

No unsatisfactory conditions were found during 1954. Samples of all milk retailed in the district were submitted for bacteriological examination. All reports were satisfactory.

ICE-CREAM.

The registration of manufacturers and vendors, and their premises, is effected by the Urban Council under the Essex County Council Act, 1933, and supervision is exercised to ensure compliance with the Ice-Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations, 1947. The number of registrations at 31st. December, 1954, was as follows:-

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Manufacturers | Nil. |
| Vendors only | 32. |
| Registered Premises ... | 32. |

In addition, many vendors registered in other areas operate within the Urban District.

Every make of ice-cream is sampled periodically to ascertain its standard of bacterial purity. Fourteen such samples were taken during the year and the results were as follows:-

| Bacteriologist's Description. | Fruit Ices. | Ministry of Health's Provisional Grading. | | | | Total. |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---|-----|------|-----|--------|
| | | I. | II. | III. | IV. | |
| Satisfactory. | 1. | 10. | 2. | - | - | 13. |
| Passable. | 1. | - | - | - | - | 1. |
| Unsatisfactory. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 2. | 10. | 2. | - | - | 14. |

By arrangement with three adjoining local authorities, the Council maintains stocks of CO₂ refrigerant, which is available to all the Sanitary Inspectors concerned, for the maintenance of samples at low temperatures during dispatch to laboratory.

HYGIENE OF FOOD PREPARATION PREMISES.

The number of premises where food is prepared, stored or retailed, is 98, as follows:-

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Restaurants | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10. |
| Factory and School Canteens | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9. |
| Manufacturing Butchers | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7. |
| Bakehouses | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5. |
| Fried Fish Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Retail Butchers' Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7. |
| Other Retail Food Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 36. |
| Retail Wet Fish Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Licensed Premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18. |

All are subject to inspection and generally found to satisfy the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938. 183 visits of inspection were made during the year. In several cases it was necessary to issue warnings concerning lack of cleanliness and other unsatisfactory conditions. Subsequent improvements rendered it unnecessary to consider formal action in these cases. The Table below shows defects required to be remedied during the year:-

Re-design and modernisation of:

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Food Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Restaurants | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Licensed Premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Structural defects | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3. |
| Defective/Inadequate sanitary accommodation | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Defective/Inadequate sink drainage facilities | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Defective/Inadequate hot water and washing facilities | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4. |
| Defective/Inadequate refuse storage | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Inadequate waste removal service | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Inadequate fly control | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1. |
| Lack of cleanliness: Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2. |
| Storerooms | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2. |

Interest in food hygiene among food handlers has been maintained and every effort has been made to foster it.

Tinned Cream.

Following advice from the Ministries of Health and Food, all consignments of a certain brand of tinned cream were withdrawn from sale within the district. Samples were submitted for bacteriological analysis, but the laboratory was unable to deal with these owing to the flood of samples received from all parts. Stocks were therefore disposed of in accordance with the Ministry's advice.

Sale of Fruit Juice and Flavoured Milk:

Both these commodities were offered for sale during the year by the large milk distributors. Quality has been satisfactory, and in the one case where bottling is done at a local dairy, steps have been taken to ensure no infringement of the Milk and Dairies Regulations.

Condemnation of Food (other than Meat):

As a result of inspections carried out at food shops and food preparation premises in the District, a total of 8 cwts. 3 qrs. 4 lbs. of food (other than meat) was voluntarily surrendered to and condemned by my Department.

MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES.

Smoke Nuisance:

During the year warnings have been issued to the managements of local premises, concerning the amount of black smoke omitted from their furnace stacks.

Seasonal Labour:

The problem of the employment in the area of casual seasonal labour for agricultural purposes has not been fully solved, but with the help of the farmers concerned, some improvement has been made in the conditions in which these people are accommodated. The matter is not merely one of providing adequate essential facilities, as many of the people concerned are of the vagrant type and not always able or willing to utilise these services when provided.

STAFF.

The Public Health Department as a whole suffered unduly during the year from absence due to sickness. Though illness of the office staff, and particularly the protracted one of the Chief Sanitary Inspector, added considerably to the arrears and pressure of work in the Department, the more difficult problem to cope with was the high sickness incidence among the manual staff, at a time when suitable replacement labour was unobtainable. In view of the long periods of shortage and the calibre of many of the men temporarily employed, when any were available, it is very much to the credit of the remaining permanent manual staff that the Department's essential services were maintained efficiently throughout the year. It is unfortunate that the negotiated rates of pay for these men, who perform vital but often dirty and arduous work in all weathers, do not compare competitively with the rates available in local industries.

On a review of office staff requirements at the end of the year, the Council had agreed to consider the appointment of a second clerical assistant during 1955.

Details of the Department's staff at 31st. December, 1954 were as follows:-

Office: Chief Sanitary Inspector, Meat and Foods Inspector.
Additional Sanitary Inspector.
Clerical Assistant.

Cleansing: 1 Foreman-Driver.
1 Tip-Chargehand.
2 Driver-Loaders.
4 Refuse Loaders.
1 Refuse Loader/Gulley Emptyier Attendant.
1 Tiphand.

Sewage Disposal: 1 Works' Manager.
1 Chargehand.
3 Labourers.
3 Labourers (part-time).

Other: 1 Disinfector/Rodent Operative (part-time).

The average age of the permanent outside staff is approximately 47 years.

